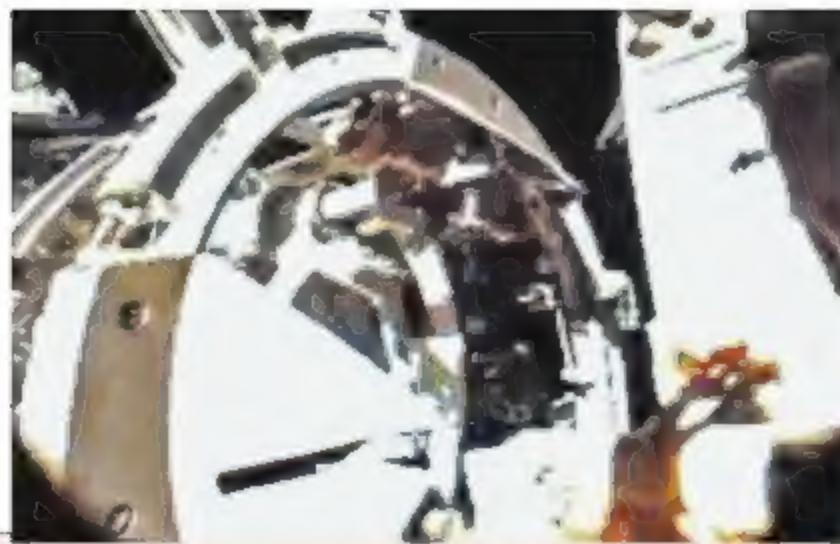




THE NEW INDIAN EXPRESS

BENGALURU • FRIDAY • MARCH 14, 2025 • ₹9.00 • PAGES 40 • LATE CITY EDITION



SPADEX MISSION ACHIEVES MAIDEN UNDOCKING, NEXT DOCKING IN APRIL
Indian Space Research Organisation recorded its first successful undocking as part of the Space Docking Experiment (SpaDeX) mission

PAVES WAY FOR CRUCIAL FUTURE MISSIONS
The two light weight satellites, SDX-01 (the chaser) and SDX-02 (target) successfully separated almost a month-and-a-half after it was scheduled to be achieved. With this success, ISRO is now bracing for its future missions — Chandrayaan-4, Bhartiya Antriksh Mission, manned space mission Gaganyaan, and Man on Moon mission

ANNOUNCEMENT AFTER 3-HOUR ASSESSMENT
■ Although the undocking happened around 9.20 am, ISRO announced on 'X' only at 12.21 pm, after assessing all parameters
■ ISRO monitored operations from Bengaluru, Lucknow, and Mauritius. Satellites' independent ops, sensors, and components are being analysed, said ISRO Chairman V Narayanan | P5

460 KM
ABOVE EARTH, THE TWO MINISATELLITES WERE SUCCESSFULLY SEPARATED

Stalin emerges as the anchor of Opposition unity

Karnataka & Telangana govts, BRS, YSRCP, BJD to attend Chennai meet on delimitation



PREETHA NAIR @ New Delhi

WITH several political parties extending support to the DMK government in Tamil Nadu in its fight over the proposed delimitation of parliamentary constituencies, Chief Minister M K Stalin appears to be emerging as the voice that binds the non-BJP parties on the issue.

Revanth to consult party brass

Telangana CM Revanth Reddy said he would attend the Chennai meet after taking permission from the high command. A DMK delegation led by minister K N Nehru met him in Delhi on Thursday and extended an invitation



Siddu to send DKS for event

Delegations of DMK leaders met K T Rama Rao, former AP CM Jagan Mohan Reddy and BJD's Naveen Patnaik, who assured their support. Siddu deputised Deputy CM D K Shivakumar for the Chennai meeting | P5

Congress-ruled Telangana and Karnataka governments, opposition BRS in Telangana, former Odisha CM Naveen Patnaik's BJD, and former Andhra Pradesh CM Jagan Mohan Reddy's YSRCP are some of the parties that have confirmed their participation in a meeting convened by Stalin on March 22. Spearheaded by Stalin, the coming-together of political parties is widely seen as a show of Opposition unity against 'delimitation'.

On Thursday, Telangana CM Revanth Reddy said he would attend the Chennai meeting after taking permission from the Congress high command. "I welcome M K Stalin's stand. I have to get permission from the Congress high command to attend the meeting. In principle, I have agreed to attend," Reddy told reporters.

Earlier this month, Stalin had written to the chief ministers of seven states, including Reddy, to form a joint action committee against the delimitation exercise. The Chennai meeting is seen as a first step towards 'unified action' against any move by the Centre to implement delimitation of Lok Sabha constituencies in a manner that will cut down the representation of states that have successfully implemented population control.

Though the BRS in Telangana keeps a distance from both the Congress and the BJP, BRS leader K T Rama Rao on Thursday confirmed it will attend the meeting. A DMK delegation also extended an invitation to Andhra Pradesh's ruling TDP and a key ally of the NDA government. According to sources, the party said that it will discuss the matter with CM Chandrababu Naidu and take a call.



RUPEE SYMBOL AXED

Intensifying the language showdown, the TN govt on Thursday replaced the Devanagari rupee symbol with a Tamil letter in its logo for Friday's TN budget | P5



PLAYING WITH COLOUR

Children celebrate Holi, a day ahead of the festival, in Karnataka's Chikmagalur on Thursday | P11



ED launches money laundering probe, raids 8 places in B'luru

EXPRESS NEWS SERVICE @ Bengaluru

GOLD SMUGGLING CASE

AFTER the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence (DRI) and Central Bureau of Investigation (CBI), the Enforcement Directorate (ED) has launched an investigation into the high-profile Bengaluru gold smuggling case.



Ranya Rao

Officers of ED raided eight places in the city and other areas on Thursday as part of their money laundering investigation. The ED launched its probe after registering a case under the Prevention of Money Laundering Act (PMLA), taking cognisance of the CBI's FIR and DRI's investigation after the arrest of actor Ranya Rao and her close associate Tarun Konduru Raj.

A team of four officers raided

Ranya's Lavelle Road residence in the morning and seized some crucial documents. An Enforcement Case Information Report (ECIR) under PMLA has been registered in New Delhi on charges of money laundering.

As investigations by CBI and DRI indicated a possible hawala scam, the ED launched its investigation. It is also looking into violations of Foreign Exchange Law by the accused.

Through the hawala route, money was being sent to Dubai from where gold bars were sent to India. A team of CBI officers raided Ranya's residence on Monday.

The ED officers also searched a place in Koramangala. However, it is not clear if this place

belongs to Ranya.

Meanwhile, the Directorate of Revenue Intelligence officers raided nine places, including Koramangala and Indiranagar, in the city.

The CBI registered the FIR on March 7 based on a complaint by Dr Abhishek Chandra Gupta, Additional Director of DRI, Headquarters. In his complaint, Gupta stated that after the arrest of Ranya on March 3, two foreign nationals were arrested in Mumbai airport on March 6 for attempting to smuggle 21.28 kg of gold worth Rs 18.92 crore. These two cases pointed to a possible smuggling syndicate operating from Dubai. He also stated that this may have larger national and international ramifications.

Due to the possibility of involvement of some government officials and others, Gupta requested the CBI to investigate the case.

B'luru to host BJP natl executive council meet

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE BJP is likely to hold its National Executive Council meeting in Bengaluru between April 18 and 20, sources said. According to party insiders, the decision to hold the meeting in Bengaluru carries significant symbolism for the BJP's Mission South project. "This could indicate the party's shift in electoral strategy towards South India, with a focused effort on solidifying its base in states like Karnataka, where the Congress is in power now," a senior BJP leader told this newspaper.

Also on the agenda is announcing a new party president, sources said, adding that the new chief may be from South India, adding that female leaders may have an edge, in line with the party's policy of promoting women's participation in politics — from organisational roles to governance.

BJP's Andhra unit chief Daggubati Purandeswari is among the women leaders being considered. The other names doing the rounds include Union ministers Manohar Lal Khattar, Bhupendra Yadav and Dharmendra Pradhan. Also in the race are Dr Sudha Yadav, Vinod Tawde, Tarun Chugh, and Arun Kumar. There is also speculation about Sarbananda Sonowal and Kiren Rijju, along with Sanjay Joshi and Ram Madhav being considered for the top party post.

WITH THIS ISSUE CITY'S BEST WEEKEND GUIDE INDULGE 40 PAGES, INCLUDING 24 OF INDULGE (TABLOID)

Koppal rape: Dip in foreigners' arrival in Hampi for Holi

KIRAN BALANNANAVAR @ Hampi

THE recent rape of two women, including a foreign national, and murder of a tourist from Odisha in Koppal district seem to have cast a shadow on the Holi celebrations in Hampi this time. Unlike previous years, not many foreign tourists have arrived in Hampi to celebrate Holi on March 15. After the Koppal incident, many tourists, especially foreigners, have cancelled their bookings with lodges, homestays and other tourism agencies in Hampi.

Virupakshi V Hampi, a tourist

guide, said Hampi has many groups that organise special programmes on Holi. But they are not so enthusiastic now because of the decline in the flow of tourists. More than 2,000 foreign tourists used to visit Hampi to participate in Holi, which was popularised by the erstwhile rulers of Vijayanagara, he added.

Police said all safety measures have been taken to prevent any untoward incidents in Hampi. Additional police personnel have been deployed at all tourist spots in Hampi and surrounding areas for Holi on March 15.

EDIT: PB

Pricy Starlink to target niche customers in India

RAKESH KUMAR @ New Delhi

ELON Musk-led Starlink may target niche customers in India due to its pricing, which is significantly higher than the services provided by Bharti Airtel and Reliance Jio. According to a report by Bernstein, Starlink's satellite technology offers advantages in remote areas but its high cost and potential speed variability make it less attractive to consumers in urban and semi-urban regions, where Airtel and Jio provide affordable and reliable broadband services.

Reliance Jio and Bharti Airtel have recently announced separate partnerships with Starlink to offer broadband services in India. Both companies have clarified that services will commence only after Starlink receives approval from the Department of Telecommunications (DoT).

Industry insiders say the DoT is likely to grant a licence to the Musk-led company soon. In fact, Union minister for Electronics &

COSTLY AFFAIR					
	Starlink	Bharti Airtel	Reliance Jio		
Speed (mbps)	50-200	100	200	100	200
Initial upfront fees (₹)	52,242	1,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
Per month fees (₹)	10,449	799	999	699	999
Tax and levies (%)	30	18	18	18	18
Total annual price (₹)	2,15,600	12,314	15,166	10,898	15,166

Information Technology, Ashwini Vaishnaw, welcomed Starlink to India through a social media post on Wednesday night. However, the minister later deleted the post.

Meanwhile, the Telecom Regulatory Authority of India is yet to release its recommendations on the pricing and other modalities for satellite broadband. Reports suggest that the telecom regulator plans to recommend satellite broadband spectrum be allotted for five years instead of 20 years to assess initial market adoption.



Policy directive out to launch Nuclear Energy Mission

RAJESH KUMAR THAKUR @ New Delhi

THE Centre has issued a policy directive to launch the Nuclear Energy Mission (NEM) as part of the country's energy transition efforts. The mission focuses on research and development of new reactor designs and technologies. To achieve this, the government will allow private investors and sectors to participate in large-scale deployments of existing technologies.

In response to a query in the

Lok Sabha, Dr Jitendra Singh, Minister of State for Personnel, Public Grievances, Pensions and the PMO, said NEM necessitates capacity building, and to facilitate active partnerships with the private sector, amendments to the Atomic Energy Act and the Civil Liability for Nuclear Damage Act are being pursued.

Dr Singh said a task force has been set up to review these amendments.



Jitendra Singh

"The task force is examining aspects such as building, owning, and operating nuclear power plants by private sector; nuclear safety, security, safeguards, fuel procurement/fabrication, waste management, and spent fuel reprocessing," the minister added.

The government also plans to partner with the private sector to set up Bharat Small Reactors (BSR), with NPCIL floating a Re-

quest-for-Proposal to private industries. These reactors will be commissioned and operated by NPCIL but set up with private capital. "With ... private investment, it is expected that the strategy for scaling up the nuclear sector will send a strong signal to participate and plan for capacity and infrastructure expansion for nuclear-related projects..." he said.

The government is also working towards making Nuclear Power Projects (NPPs) eligible for climate finance, Dr Singh said.

BUY NOW!

96001 00090
96001 00020



Scan the QR Code to Register